

South Central MIRECC Community Outreach Activities

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February, 2011



Challenges of Rural Mental Health

- Geographic
- Cultural



Challenges of Rural Mental Health

- Rural “culture”
 - Patriotism—many recruits for recent conflicts
 - Self-reliant
 - Independent



Challenges of Rural Mental Health

- Cultural challenges to improving engagement
 - Lack of anonymity
 - Stigma of mental illness
 - Seek help from primary care or informal sources
 - May not use VAMCs or CBOCs or drop out after just 1 visit

MIRECC-Community Partnerships

- Build on existing MIRECC expertise and interests
 - Continue telemedicine/technology research theme
 - Build new partnerships with CBOCs and community stakeholders concerned about mental health of returning Veterans

CBOC Partnership Project

- Visits to all CBOCs



- Established connections between CBOC providers, MIRECC, and VISN MH

CBOC Partnership Project

- Outcomes
 - Identified educational needs of CBOC providers
 - Limited knowledge of Uniform Services Handbook
 - Need for training in evidence based therapies

CBOC Partnership Project

- Outcomes
 - Inclusion of CBOC providers in presentations at MIRECC meeting
 - MIRECC newsletter coverage of CBOCs
 - CBOC mental health staff included in advisory groups
 - Internet Community of Practice established

- MIRECC Communique includes regular articles about and for CBOC providers

**HOW MENTAL HEALTH CLINICIANS AT
CBOCs COLLABORATE WITH THEIR VA
MEDICAL CENTER COLLEAGUES**

By Maurilio Garcia-Maldonado, M.D.
Beaumont VA Outpatient Clinic Care Line Executive

- Community of Practice

BRINGING THE SOCIAL NETWORK TO VA MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS: THE VISN 16 MH PROVIDERS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

By Ashley McDaniel, M.A.

On September 1, 2010, the SC MIRECC launched the VISN 16 Mental Health Providers Community of Practice website. The website was developed in collaboration with the VISN 16 Mental Health Product Line (MHPL), with funding from the VISN 16 Office of Rural Health.

Online communities of practice are being formed in VA facilities nationwide to promote communication among providers in various geographic locations and increase access to educational materials and resources. The VISN 16 Community of Practice aims to create a virtual network involving the SC MIRECC, MHPL, parent facilities and community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) to improve access to educational interventions and materials related to mental health treatment, provide discussion forums for providers to communicate with each other about clinical issues, and



create a "practice network" that provides a central location to capture best practices, share information, and promote standardized practices and processes in mental healthcare.

The website is a product of the SC MIRECC CBOC Partnership Project, which conducted site visits and a

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Partnering With Communities

- Attributes of community partners for other outreach projects:
 - Positive regard in rural communities
 - Part of “informal care networks”
 - Likely to have relatively frequent contacts with returning Veterans in need of mental health services

Partnering With Communities

Presentations

- Recent/ongoing Partnership Activities
 - ACCESS (Dr. Kirchner)
 - Clergy
 - Community Colleges
 - Courts
 - Community Colleges (Dr. Hunt)
 - NonVA rural health providers (Dr. Teasdale)